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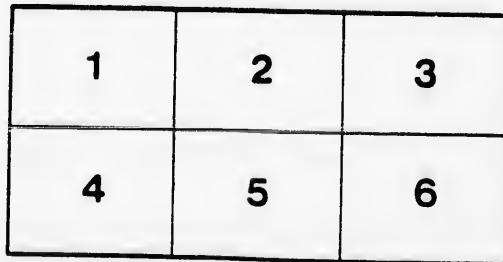
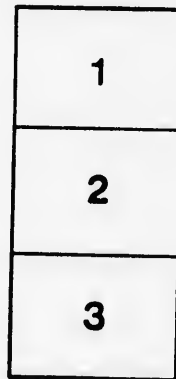
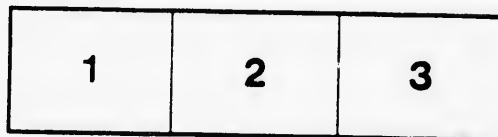
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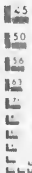
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ZIONISM.

— • • • —
A SERMON DELIVERED

BY THE

Rev. Meldola de Sola,

OF MONTREAL.

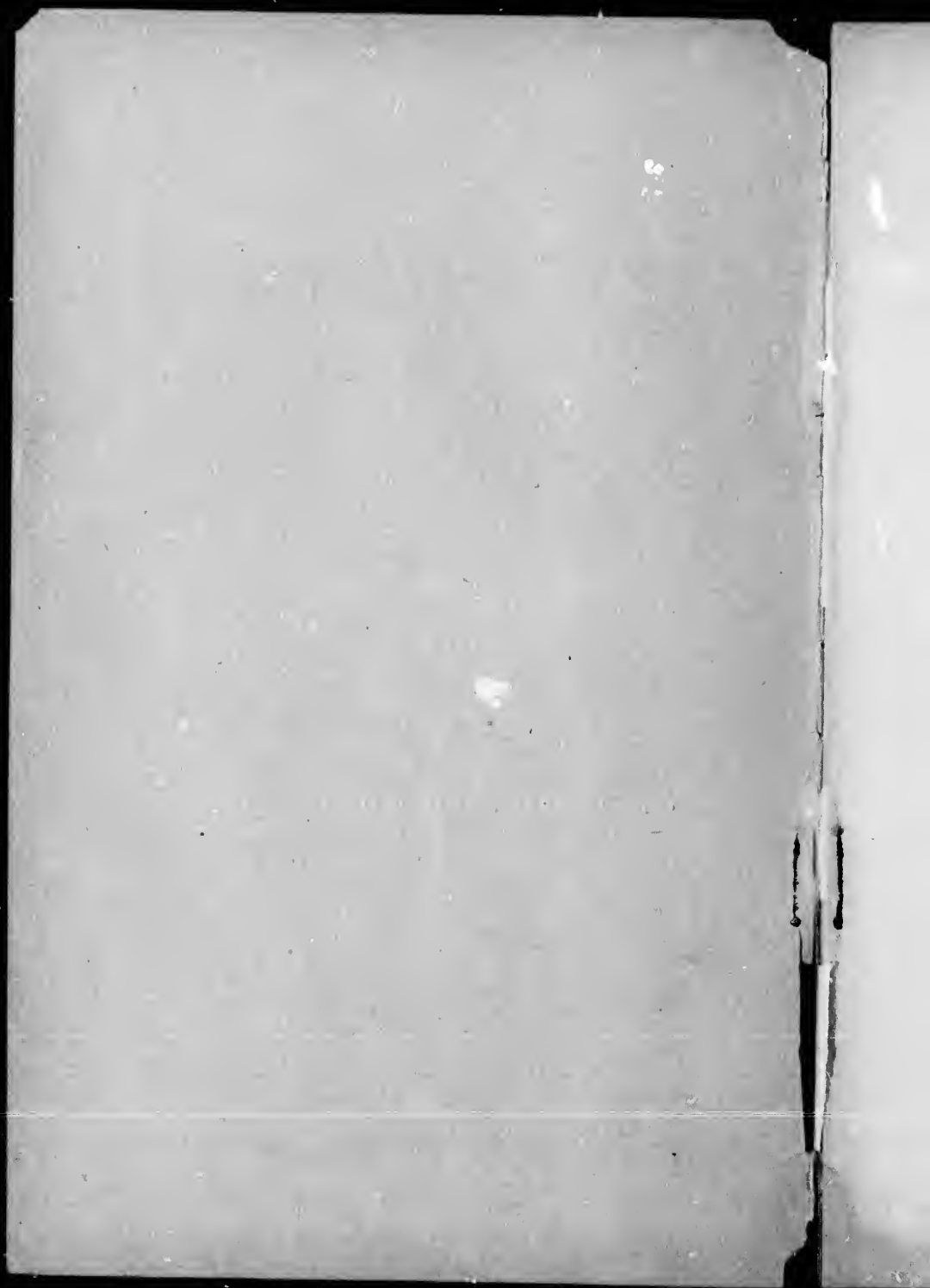
ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF PASSOVER.

5660.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

and dedicated to

THE MONTREAL ZIONIST SOCIETY.



ZIONISM.

SERMON DELIVERED IN THE SPANISH AND
PORTUGUESE SYNAGOGUE, MONTREAL,
ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF PASS-
OVER, 5660,

BY THE REV. MELDOLA DE SOLA.

כי לא בהפזון תצאו ובמנוסה לא תלכו כי ה' אלהי ישראל הוא
ומאספכם אלהי ישראל :

“For not in haste shall ye go forth, and not in flight shall ye go; for the Eternal goeth before you, and the God of Israel will be your gatherer.”

—Isaiah, LII, 12.



The Passover festival, which we are now celebrating, is essentially our national festival. Not only does it commemorate that wondrous night when the angel of destruction swept over the homes of Israel's cruel taskmasters; not only is it the anniversary of the birth of our nationality, that glorious culmination of the series of marvels wrought in Israel's behalf; but, with that beauty of design which ever characterizes the ways of an all-wise Providence, it is associated with nature, and thus preaches to us in manner most eloquent, Faith, Hope: faith is the ability of the Almighty to fulfil the words of His prophets, hope in the glorious future which they promise to our nation. Celebrated by divine command in the spring of the year when nature is reviving, Passover bids us study nature, bids us contemplate nature's return to life after the death-like sleep of winter, that in this return to life we may recognize

a type of Israel's revivals in the hoary past and in the days yet to come.

When our ancestors groaned under the tyranny of the Egyptians, to look forward to deliverance seemed to be hoping against hope. And yet even if at one time they did doubt the accuracy of the glad tidings that deliverance was actually at hand, they never abandoned hope in its ultimate accomplishment. In the regular recurrence of nature's seasons they beheld a literal fulfilment of the Divine promise to Noah that while the earth lasted harvest should follow seed-time and heat follow cold, that summer and winter and day and night should not cease; and by this regular recurrence of light after shadow, of life after apparent death, they were confirmed in the faith which impelled them to believe that the God who had promised to deliver them would fulfil His word even as He redeemed the promise made to Noah.

To us who live thirty two centuries later, with what additional significance is nature's revival fraught! We have seen all the power and ingenuity of man exercised since the destruction of the Temple to effect our extermination. But as nature simply sleeps during winter to burst forth into all the splendor of spring, so has our nation merely slept during the long winter of its dispersion, bearing within it, even as it did at the time of the Egyptian bondage, those germs of national life which but await the fiat of the Almighty to break forth into all the glory of revived nationality.

To emphasize a fact upon which we have repeatedly dwelt, Israel, the smallest and least powerful of ancient nations lives to celebrate this the 3212th. anniversary of its birth, while all the mighty empires of antiquity, without exception, have been swept off the world's stage by the relentless hand of time. In this miraculous circumstance (for it is in very truth the miracle of miracles) not only have we irrefutable testi-

mony to the over-ruling providence of the Almighty, but we have a literal fulfilment of the prophecies relating to our dispersion and preservation.

וְאֵץ נֹס וְזֹאת בְּחַיְתָם בְּאֶרֶץ אֹיְבֵיהֶם לֹא מֵאַחַתִּים וְלֹא
נִעְלָתִים לְכַלְתָּם לְהַפֵּר בְּרִיתִי אִתָּם כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיהֶם.

“And yet for all this, though they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I loathe them, to make an end of them, to break my covenant with them, for I am the Eternal their God.”

Not only, then, does the circumstance that our marvellous survival evidences the work of an almighty and all-wise Being lead us to conclude that this all-wise Being would not have preserved us through all the trials and dangers of thousands of years except for an end whose glory will be fully commensurate with so stupendous a miracle, but this literal fulfilment of the prophecies relating to our dispersion and preservation compels us to infer that the prophecies foretelling our restoration in the land given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants will be fulfilled with the same fidelity; for it is inconceivable that the word of God can be true in the one instance and false in the other.

And what is the character of these prophecies relating to our future? Is there any ambiguity, any uncertainty about them? Do they leave room for doubt, for difference of construction, difference in interpretation? On the contrary, they are expressed with the utmost clearness. By way of illustration, let us cite the words which Moses addressed to our ancestors immediately after he had foretold the very dispersion which we are now experiencing.

אִם יִהְיֶה נִדְחֶךָ בְּקִצֵּה הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשָּׁם יִקְבָּצְךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּמִשָּׁם
יִקְרָךְ וְהִבְיָאֶךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יִרְשׁוּ אֲבוֹתֶיךָ וְיִרְשֶׁתָּ
וְהִיטַבְךָ וְהִרְבֵּךְ מֵאַחַתִּיךָ.

“Even though thy outcasts be at the uttermost part of the heavens, from there will the Eternal thy God

gather thee and from there will He take thee, and the Eternal thy God will bring thee unto the land which thy fathers possessed and thou shalt possess it, and He will do good unto thee and multiply thee above thy fathers." In this inspired message of our great legislator, we have a perfectly clear, perfectly explicit statement of the future in store for us. The Almighty Himself declares that our nation shall again possess its ancestral home, and not all the power and ingenuity of man, nor all the scepticism of our own degenerates, can prevent the literal and complete fulfilment of this promise.

In the dreary ages of our dispersion it was faith in the fulfilment of this promise, and consequent hope in the restoration of Israel's glory, that fortified our fathers to withstand trials and persecutions under which any other people would have sunk. Sustained by this hope and faith, they were enabled to defy a world combined against them, enabled, phoenix-like, to rise into new life from the ashes of devastated homes and ruined fortunes, enabled to outlive those who plotted their extermination. And if there were anything that could strengthen this faith and hope, it was their celebration of the Passover. Assembling in their Ghetto homes, and often even in subterranean crypts, to observe the Seder, they felt that even though sorely tried by persecution they had not been entirely abandoned by Heaven, for they realized that their very celebration of the festival was evidence of providential protection and guidance, and thus inspired with faith and sustained by hope, they looked forward confidently to the future, exclaiming with implicit trust in the fidelity and immutability of the Almighty :

השתא הנה אנו מצה פה פה דישראל.

"At present we celebrate the festival here, next

year may we celebrate it in the land of Israel."

And we who can celebrate the Seder without dread of the intrusion of a bloodthirsty mob as in former times, we who can assemble at that time-honoured and beautiful ceremony without fear of the diabolical "blood accusation" heard in certain parts of Europe to-day, we whose lives and liberties are protected and safeguarded in this glorious British Empire: Shall we allow ease and prosperity to render us indifferent to our nation's future? Shall we permit our faith in Israel's destiny to degenerate into empty words of admiration for our people's history—"empty words" because stamped with indifference as regards the hastening of our national restoration? Shall we pray daily for the revival of Zion's glory, but inwardly hope that it may not occur in our time because of the ease and comfort of present conditions?

Not only would this be the very name of selfishness (for it would ignore the fact that some seven millions of our brethren are the victims of persecution more or less virulent), but it would evidence a gross materialism utterly at variance with the spirit of Judaism. It would prove that we failed to appreciate the splendor of our promised future, that we were incapable of understanding the glory of Israel's predicted restoration.

And here let me observe with all possible emphasis, that hope for the rehabilitation of our people in the Holy Land is not in any way inconsistent with our duty as loyal citizens of the British Empire, nor with the love we bear the land that gives us a happy home. An eminent English Zionist, who has proved that loyalty to Zion and loyalty to England are not incompatible by serving as Chief of Staff to one of the British generals in the present war, once observed: "A man may love both his father and his mother. Palestine is my fatherland, England my motherland." This is a per-

fect definition of our position as British Jews. Palestine is our fatherland; England, the British Empire, our motherland. Our motherland is prosperous and mighty; our fatherland, alas, has been prostrated by centuries of misrule, and is debarred from prosperity by the survival of mediæval conditions. Now love for our motherland does not demand that we stifle love for our fatherland. Nay, if we were so materialistic as to be incapable of loving the land of our fathers and interesting ourselves in its welfare because we did not happen to be domiciled within its borders, our affection for the motherland might well be regarded with suspicion. For of what ideal sentiment are materialists capable? As selfish materialists, our love for England would not be a genuine sentiment inspired by admiration for the nobility of British institutions and the uprightness of the British government, it would simply be a feeling based upon material prosperity which would vanish the moment that prosperity disappeared. It follows, therefore, that the very idealism which impels us to love our fatherland, a country in which we have not the slightest material interest, is a guarantee that our love for England is not a feeling merely based upon self-interest, but a genuine sentiment of affection inspired by the nobility of British laws and British institutions, and the fidelity with which England champions the eternal principles of justice and righteousness.

But how is love for our fatherland to be attested? By simply praying for its restoration to the glory of former times? By sitting with folded hands, and leaving it entirely to Providence to effect this revival? That a large and influential and rapidly increasing number of our co-religionists in every part of the globe do not hold such an opinion is shown by the extraordinary growth of the Zionist movement. Zionism, in the present accepted sense of the term, yields to no school of thought in reverence and profound admiration for

the marvels wrought by Providence. But Zionism maintains that Providence expects us to employ the faculties, the powers and the opportunities with which we have been blessed in the furtherance of the end for which we pray. Zionism does not underestimate nor undervalue the efficacy and potency of prayer. But Zionism protests that prayer and trust in Providence must not be used as a cloak to cover indifference and apathy as regards the hastening of our national restoration.

On former occasions, in addressing you upon this subject, I have dwelt almost exclusively upon what has been termed "the first plank in the Zionist platform;" that is, the securing in Palestine of "a publicly legally assured home" for those of our people who are the victims of a fanatical intolerance more in keeping with the dark ages than with the period in which we live. The mere fact that Zionism has prepared an elaborate plan for their relief—a plan involving the conversion of the desolate areas in Palestine into smiling centres of agricultural activity, and the transformation of the impoverished cities of our fatherland into busy hives of mechanical and commercial industry—is in itself an all-sufficient reason why the movement should receive the sympathy and support of every Israelite who is not indifferent to the welfare of his brethren, and who loves the home of his ancestors.

These may be termed the economic, the philanthropic and the sentimental aspects of the movement. But there is also the religious phase of Zionism; and it is to this that I would more especially direct your attention to-day.

The more I contemplate this extraordinary movement, the more I reflect upon the wonders it has wrought since its inception: uniting our people as they have not been united since the destruction of the

Temple ; bringing them together from every part of the globe, to meet in what is really a Jewish Parliament, as they have not been gathered in representative assembly since the downfall of Jerusalem ; interesting in Jewish affairs, and reclaiming to religious observance men to whom Judaism had become a dead letter : the more I ponder over these marvels accomplished by the movement within a few years, nay, within a comparatively few months, the more firmly do I become convinced that Zionism is an instrument in the hand of Providence *to pave the way* for that restoration for which we pray, and which He in whose hands are the destinies of nations has so emphatically declared shall be fully accomplished.

In reviving the material prosperity of Palestine, Zionism will create the economic and social conditions which must necessarily precede the final restoration. In uniting our people, otherwise kept apart by conflicting local interests, and in winning back to religious observance men who have hitherto regarded religion as a thing not to be thought of seriously, Zionism is propagating those sentiments of brotherhood and fostering that reverence for the Torah which, our religion teaches, will be indispensable to the ultimate restoration of our nation's glory.

That the complete achievement of the aims of Zionism cannot be effected in a few years, nor even in a few decades, does not detract from the merit of the movement, nor from its claim to our sympathy and support. Great movements of world significance are not consummated with the suddenness of magic ; and Zionism, which has to undo the evils and wrongs of nearly two thousand years, which has to reclaim a country subjected to every baneful influence for ages, and which has to elevate myriads of people whose manhood has been crushed by diabolical persecution extending over centuries, cannot in reason be expected

to achieve complete success within a brief period of time.

In anticipation of these difficulties, and with the knowledge that such obstacles would stand in the way of Israel's ultimate restoration, the Almighty has forewarned us:

כִּי לֹא בְהֶפְזֵךְ תֵּצֵא וּבִמְנוּסָה לֹא תֵלַכְךָ

“For not in haste shall ye go forth, and not in flight shall ye go.” Our final restoration, it is thus divinely declared, is not to be effected suddenly. We may pray (and we shall continue to pray) for the revival of Zion's glory; but our prayers, we are here given to understand, will not be answered by any sudden revolution in the policy of nations, nor by any magical transformation in the world of thought. *Gradually*, but none the less surely on that account, is the restoration to be effected. *By progressive steps* is our journey Zionward to proceed. יֵלְכוּ מִחַיִל אֶל הֵיל יִרְאֶה אֱלֹהִים בְּצִיּוֹן “They shall proceed from strength to strength to appear before God in Zion,” exclaims the Psalmist. And when the way has thus been paved, and the conditions demanded by the Torah have been fulfilled as far as it is within human power to fulfil them, then will come the Prince of the House of David who will gather our outcasts from the four corners of the earth, and complete the restoration of our nation's glory as in days of yore.

We have said that the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt is a type of the redemption to come; and in so far as the former followed a long period during which redemption seemed hopeless, the analogy between the two is perfect. But in other respects there is an essential difference between them. The deliverance from Egypt was accomplished suddenly, כִּי בְהֶפְזֵךְ יֵצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם “For in haste didst thou go forth from the land of Egypt.” But of the redemption of the future we are told: כִּי לֹא בְהֶפְזֵךְ תֵּצֵא “For

ye shall not go forth in haste." The reason for this difference may be readily explained.

Scarcely had the Egyptians driven our ancestors forth when they repented of the act, and wished to re-capture and re-enslave them. The redemption of the future will be permanent and undisputed. The deliverance from Egypt affected only one country, and our people dwelt exclusively in that country. The redemption of the future will influence the destinies of our people in every part of the globe, and it will affect the whole world. It will be the most significant event in the annals of the human race. In the words of the Talmud : גדול יום קבוץ גלויות כיום שנבראו בו שמים וארץ "The day of the gathering of the exiles (of Israel) will be as great as the day on which the heavens and the earth were created." With this essential difference between the redemption of the past and the redemption of the future, we can readily understand why the latter is not to be accomplished with the haste which characterized the exit from Egypt.

While we know that nothing is too difficult for the Almighty, we also know that He does not employ supernatural agencies where natural means will suffice; and in the text we are given very clearly to understand that it is by natural means that the way is to be paved for that stupendous event which will bring to a close the dreary ages of our dispersion, and terminate forever the wrongs, the persecutions and the unspeakable miseries that were inaugurated with the destruction of our national sanctuary.

In days of yore, when Gideon was summoned to deliver our ancestors from the Midianites, he asked the angel who appeared to him for a sign to convince him that he had really been divinely commissioned to effect the deliverance; and the sign was graciously vouchsafed to him. We need not ask for a sign to assure us of the merit of Zionism, for one has been

already granted. In the inspired message of Moses predicting the gathering of our outcasts from all parts of the world, we are told that at the time of the restoration we are to be more numerous than in former days. והרבך מאבתוך "And He will multiply thee above thy fathers." Now if we reflect that the Jewish population of the world to-day is about twice as great as it was in the time of King David, the most glorious period in our history; and this notwithstanding the unknown fate of the ten tribes, and the centuries of ruinous persecution to which we have been subjected; we cannot fail to recognize in this most significant circumstance a veritable sign that Providence is preparing us gradually and in a perfectly natural manner for the long hoped-for and long prayed-for restoration. And as Providence has given us this sign of gradual and natural preparation for the revival of Zion's glory, we need have no fear that we shall be irreverently attempting to encroach upon the domain of Providence when we employ the faculties, the abilities and the opportunities with which we have been blessed in laboring, in our humble way, for the same glorious end.

From a purely religious point of view, then, Zionism has a most sacred, most imperative claim upon the sympathy and support of every member of the Congregation of Jacob.

By a monstrous but characteristic perversion of the truth, an apostate from Judaism, who wished to save our souls by converting us into renegades from Israel's sublime faith, recently stated in this city that Zionism was a sign of the times foreshadowing a general adoption by the followers of Judaism of the religion of their neighbors. Zionism has been frequently misrepresented, but the misrepresentation has yet to be coined that can vie with this in unblushing and insolent falsehood.

Zionism is the Jew's declaration to the world that he has not lost faith in the power and unalterable determination of the Almighty to fulfil His reiterated promise to restore the children of Israel to the land of their fathers. Zionism is a vigorous expression of the Jew's belief that his people have not been preserved for thousands of years, while oppressor after oppressor has been crushed, for so inglorious an end as gradual disintegration at the hands of conversionist missionaries, who, being powerless in manly, straightforward and logical argument, resort to tactics that place a premium upon deceit, falsehood and hypocrisy. Zionism is a proclamation of the Jew's conviction that while England, the United States, and one or two other enlightened countries uphold the principles of justice and righteousness, the "peace and good-will" preached elsewhere in the name of religion is practised in the form of fanatical intolerance and persecution, and that the only remedy for this survival of mediæval bigotry is to secure for the Jewish people "a publicly legally assured home" in the land of their fathers.

Can any one of you be indifferent to the success of such a movement? Can you allow the noble men who are devoting every energy to this sacred cause to labor and struggle on without your sympathy? Prove that you can rise above the materialism which concerns itself only with the welfare of the individual, prove that you are not deaf to the appealing cries of your less fortunate brethren, prove that you are worthy of your nation's glorious past and of its still more glorious future: prove this by supporting as far as lies within your power the great Zionist organization, which, from the very nature of its constitution, is THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE, the one body in existence which speaks and is acting for the Jews of every part of the globe.

And if the complete fruition of the aims of Zionism

come not in your day, remember that your people's redemption is not to be accomplished suddenly, **כִּי לֹא יִבְסְמוּסֶהָ** that "not in haste will ye go forth," **כִּי לֹא תִלְכוּן** that "not in flight will ye go;" but that even though the restoration for which you pray be yet distant, and the preparation for it by such natural agencies as Zionism be apparently slow, it will none the less surely be effected, **כִּי הֵלֶךְ לִפְנֵיכֶם ה'** "for the Eternal goeth before you,"—He who maketh straight the crooked ways will smoothen your path, **יִסְמְכֶם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** "and the God of Israel will be your gatherer"—He who hath preserved you so wondrously will assemble you or your posterity to worship Him **בְּהַר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בִּירוּשָׁלַם** "on the holy mountain in Jerusalem." Amen. Amen.

